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PA/HO Department of State

E.O. 12958, as amended

June 21, 2006

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Authority **NND 35857**  
By **AB** NARA Date **7/15/01**NEA, Off of Leg, Dord, Syria,  
Iraq Affs, Reds relating to  
Dr. Dr. Leg, Syr, 1969-72 POL REL,  
DRAQ-US 1972  
Box 13 Lot file 75D442  
JCS Iraq/US  
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Some very  
good comments on  
Iraq.

October 21, 1972

TO: David A. Korn (NEA/ARN)

FROM: Arthur L. Lowris (USINT)

SUBJ: U.S. Policy Toward Iraq

I hope your visit will provide ample opportunity to discuss U.S. policy toward Iraq and our general approach and tactics.

It hardly needs reiterating that Iraq will be of increasing interest to the U. S. in the years ahead, as much for negative reasons as positive ones. There are, of course, Mobil and Esso and Iraq's huge oil reserves and even larger potential reserves (Jim Akins ranks it No. 2 in the Middle East right behind Saudi Arabia). Yet the U.S. does not need Iraq per se nor its oil. What we do need, I believe, is a semblance of orderly development and stability over the next ten or twenty years in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia to insure Western access to the oil. Iraq, because of its geographic location, its role as a major oil producer, and its political vulnerability, must, therefore, be of considerable interest to us. This would be true even if the Soviets had not for the same and additional reasons made it one of their major targets in the area.

What opportunities do we have? For the time being, they are very minimal. The Baa'th regime is convinced we seek to overthrow them and they see our relationship to the Shah, our policy in the Gulf, and our backing of IPC, all in this context. Our first task should, therefore, be to attempt to dissuade them of this erroneous impression. It is a long term proposition for, in fact, U.S. policies in the area do conflict with Baa'thi aspirations at almost every turn.

How do we begin building some mutuality of interests? I am convinced that we should not be the ones to seek out opportunities and put them forward to the GOI. The more we behave as a suitor, the more suspicious they will become. Instead I would recommend a posture in which we behave very correctly, ignore the violent anti-Americanism of the media, and wait for opportunities to respond to the Iraqi requests that are bound to come. When they do, we should respond as handsomely and quickly as possible, regardless of the importance of the particular request. We should make a point of observing reciprocity in words, but in our actions we should be willing to overlook some of their more erratic behavior.

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It follows from the above that we should be in no hurry to clear up the contentieux. Our respective positions on the compound, for example, are so far apart that there is little prospect of resolution until there is a strong desire for improved relations. When and if the time comes to discuss the contentieux, I hope we can show maximum flexibility and avoid laying down conditions.

Finally, our presence here is not yet firm nor are the ground rules established. (The Foreign Ministry cannot, for example, decide whether or not to give us our own cable address.) Until we are established, it is important that my reporting is not referred to by Department Officers in speaking with the press, or even in diplomatic exchanges. Should any sensitive or adverse information about Iraq emanating from Washington get back to the GOI, it has many ways of harassing us, and they would not hesitate to do so.

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